(c) In order to minimize the disparity in minimum wages in various regions of the country, the Central Government has issued guidelines for setting up Regional Minimum Wages Advisory Committees. In order to bring in uniformity in minimum wages, the Central Government mooted the concept of a national floor level minimum wage and fixed it at Rs. 35/- per day in1996 based on the recommendations of the National Commission on Rural Labour (1991) and subsequent rise in the price level. The national floor level wage is periodically revised based on the basis of increase in the Consumer Price Index. It was last revised to Rs. 50/- per day w.e.f. 1.9.2002. The State/UTs have been requested from time to time to ensure that the minimum wage in none of the scheduled employments including beedi making is below the national floor level wage.

Cell for upliftment of working women

†3118. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether any special cell has been set up for the upliftment in the conditions of female workers;

(b) if so, the aims and objectives thereof;

(c) whether this cell could improve upon the conditions of female workers; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) A separate cell for women labour is functioning in the Ministry to pay special attention to the problems of women labour. The Cell is responsible for coordinating efforts in respect of Women labour within the policy framework on women, implementation of the Equal Remuneration Act, collection, compilation and dissemination of information on various aspects of the female labour force in various economic sectors and follow up action on the Supreme Court Judgement in the matter of prevention of sexual harassment of women at their work place and periodical reviews of the initiatives taken in the matter in consultation with related agencies.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) and (d) Special efforts have been made to improve upon the working conditions of female workers through the implementation of the following initiatives :

*The Cell is administering a Grants-in-aid Scheme for the welfare of women labour. This Scheme is administered through voluntary organizations by giving grant-in-aid to them for providing awareness generation amongst women workers.

*Monitoring the implementation of the 'Equal Remuneration Act, 1976' which aims at ensuring payment of equal remuneration to men and women for the same work or work of a similar nature without any discrimination and for prevention of discrimination against women in recruitment as well as in conditions of service, such as promotions, training, transfers, etc.

*As a follow up action on the judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, in the case of writ petition No. 666-70 of 1992 filed by Vishaka & Ors. Vs State of Rajasthan & Ors. laying down certain guidelines for the prevention of sexual harassment of women employees in their work places.

Global survey report by ILO

3119. SHRIMATI N. P. DURGA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the International Labour Organisation in a global survey report which was released in May, 2003 states that women constitute the single largest group discriminated against at work place with low wages, adverse working conditions, low rate of employment and greater insecurity; and

(b) the steps taken by Government to end discrimination against women, provide equal opportunities at par with men and accord respectable position to them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) No Sir. The ILO's Global Report on "Time for Equality at Work" does not mention that women constitute the single largest group discriminated against at work place. However,the report mentions that women are often placed in the peripheral, insecure and